

As Time Goes By – Which Do You Prefer: Paper or Plastic?

As with all organizations, change for the NYIPLA is an inevitable fact of life. One challenge, however, lies in timing the rate of change at a pace to maximize advantages for the Association and minimize inconvenience to our individual members.

The Association has undergone change in recent years as part of a transition from paper to electronic records. From its inception, paper records, including Bulletins, Greenbooks, photographs, and other hard-copy artifacts, have been key to maintaining a storehouse of knowledge about the Association's activities, as well as a sense of continuity in planning for the future.

It goes without saying that paper records have their pluses and minuses. Paper tends to yellow over time, and black-and-white photographs tend to fade along with our collective memory about the photos. Furthermore, paper records tend to be discarded or lost as our members and their firms and corporations move from one office location to another. Illustrative of the risks associated with paper records, NYIPLA Bulletins for the 1970s decade are missing from the Association's coffers and perhaps lost. Such a loss risks leaving a gap in our knowledge of the NYIPLA history of that era.

Over the course of the last decade, there has been a gradual shift away from paper and toward electronic record-keeping, both within and outside of the Association. There are upsides to this trend since electronic records can have a long shelf life, are relatively cheap to create and store, and tend to resist fading and other forms of degradation. The downside is that some members, particularly more senior ones among us, may not be as comfortable with using new technology, and may prefer paper records that seem more familiar to them.

A case in point is the Association's annual yearbook, the Greenbook. It was a substantial tome provided to the membership in hard copy format. It provided a listing of the names and addresses of the members, and identified committee participants, and past and present Officers and Directors, and included the NYIPLA Bylaws as well as photographs about activities during the previous Association



year. In short, it contained a lot of reference material. Unfortunately, the Greenbook was relatively time consuming to assemble, and expensive to produce. Further, by the time it was finally off the presses, the Greenbook was often out-of-date, serving as a snapshot of a prior time, rather than as a handbook for the current one.

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In an effort to alleviate some of these problems, the Greenbook was replaced with a concise "Green Booklet," as supplemented by information contained on the NYIPLA website. The Green Booklet provides brief summaries of significant events occurring during an Association year, and is distributed fairly quickly since its production time is relatively short and production cost low.

Current and historical reference information about the Association is not located in the Green Booklet, but rather on the NYIPLA website. Advantages of having the reference information on the website include its ready accessibility online and the ease with which the information can be uploaded, downloaded, and updated as needed to keep current.

If you haven't visited the NYIPLA's new website (www.nyipla.org) yet, or haven't visited it recently, please consider doing so now. You may wish to know the answer to a question, for example, relating to the Association Bylaws or its former Board of Directors. In that case, simply click on "About Us" at the top of the home page, and then click on "Board of Directors Officers." On the left-hand portion of the page that pops up, you will find a menu. Toward the bottom of that menu, the Bylaws and Former Officers and Directors are accessible via click-on. Similarly, Greenbooks and Green Booklets are accessible by clicking on "News and Advocacy" at the top right of the webpage, and then clicking on "Association Annual Review." Bulletins are accessible in an analogous fashion.

Additional information about the NYIPLA website, including member login information needed to access a secure portion of the website, can be obtained by reaching out to NYIPLA Executive Administrator Feikje van Rein or the Projects Manager Lisa Lu. Feikje and Lisa can be reached at admin@nyipla.org or by phoning 1-201-461-6603.

Irrespective of whether you prefer paper or plastic, I hope that you will enjoy navigating the new website, and will find something useful on it to ponder.

With kind regards,
Dale Carlson